



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Statement of the U.S. Acting Permanent Observer on the Situation in Ukraine  
Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Deputies  
March 12, 2014**

The United States is steadfast in our determination to oppose actions that violate international law, and to support the government, the people, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Accordingly, President Obama will welcome Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk of Ukraine to the White House later today to highlight the strong support of the United States for the people of Ukraine, who have demonstrated inspiring courage, resilience, discipline, and restraint through this crisis. The President and Prime Minister will discuss how to find a peaceful resolution to Russia's ongoing military intervention in Crimea.

As both the President and Secretary Kerry have made clear, Russia's military intervention in Ukraine unequivocally violates Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is unacceptable. We, along with many other nations, have repeatedly called on Russia to speak directly with the Government of Ukraine, to welcome international observers and human rights monitors, and to send their troops back to their bases. To date, they have not done any of these.

We find it ironic that Russia is opposed to holding Ukrainian elections in May, as called for by the Rada, which is the most representative and democratic body in Ukraine today, claiming these are too soon and the situation in Ukraine is too unsettled. Yet Russia is supporting the March 16 referendum in Crimea, only four days from now, when foreign troops have intervened and are on the streets of Crimea, and while international observer teams from an organization that Russia, itself, is a member of, are kept out at gunpoint and with warning shots fired.

Any referendum on Crimea must be conducted consistent with Ukrainian law. And we welcome the Secretary General's request for a Venice Commission opinion on this matter, which we would like to see publicized before any referendum is allowed to proceed.

We categorically reject any comparison between the situation in Crimea and the situation in Kosovo.



Similarly, any effort by Russia to annex or otherwise unilaterally alter the borders of a sovereign state would be inconsistent with Russia's obligations under the UN Charter and would fly in the face of what it means to be a responsible member of the international community in the 21st Century. Again, we welcome the Venice Commission's examination of this question at the request of the Secretary General.

We also reiterate, yet again, that there are clear steps which should be taken immediately to resolve this crisis in a manner which respects the interests of Russia, as well as Ukraine:

- pull back the Russian forces to their bases;
- let international monitors into all of Ukraine, including Crimea, to ensure the rights of all Ukrainians are being respected, including those of ethnic Russians;
- and begin consultations between the government of Russia and Ukraine, with the participation of the international community.
- the international community should also support the people of Ukraine as they prepare for elections in May.

Mr. Chairman: From the very beginning of this crisis, we have said that emotions must be held in check and calmer heads must prevail. It strikes me that we have among us, sitting at the head of this table, one of the calmer heads of the day. We are grateful to the Secretary General for his rational approach to this crisis, for his commitment to uphold the rule of law and the democratic values of this organization, and for his adherence to the need for all members to fulfill their legal obligations. We support his call for an International Advisory Panel, are grateful for his engagement of the Venice Commission, are anxious to see Council of Europe observers on the ground in Crimea and elsewhere in Ukraine as he has proposed, and appreciate his attempts to bring the parties together in a neutral setting where negotiations between neighboring Members of the Council of Europe may take place to resolve one of the most serious and dangerous crises to face Europe in decades. Please, Mr. Chairman, I would be grateful if you would convey our gratitude and support to him.

Esteemed Ambassadors: there comes a time when naked aggression and blatant untruths must be recognized for what they are - attempts to circumvent established international law and norms. We urge this Committee to call it like it is, and to find a way to direct one of its most respected and storied Members to return to the standards and conduct that make this organization so relevant and so important. We all want a Russia that is a trusted and respected partner, and not a pariah.